

Dear Friends of USF,

The past two weeks have been particularly busy in Tallahassee. This issue of the newsletter will focus primarily on the USF System's top construction priorities for the 2014 Session and we recently got a better indication of where those stand in the process with the passage of the House and Senate versions of the budget last week. I am delighted to report that one of the top construction priorities for the USF System, the USF St. Petersburg College of Business facility, was funded robustly in both the Senate and the House budget proposals. The Senate is recommending \$15 million for the project, which is the highest-funded university construction project in the Senate budget by a wide margin. The entire USF System is extremely grateful to Senators Jeff Brandes (R-St. Petersburg) and Jack Latvala (R-Clearwater) for their leadership and efforts to ensure this project was so well-funded in the Senate's proposed budget. We have included a new feature in this edition entitled USF Systems "Friend in the Legislature" Spotlight that will include some candid conversations with our supporters about the USF System and other issues moving through the Capitol. Please check out the first of these features below on Senator Brandes and the premium he has placed on ensuring the USFSP College of Business project is funded this session. We will continue to highlight other members of the Legislature who are assisting the USF System in future issues.

The House Budget proposal for university construction is the largest we have seen in many years, which is a direct indication of the level of importance placed on these projects by House leadership under the guidance of Speaker Will Weatherford (R-Wesley Chapel) and Appropriations Chairman Seth McKeel (R-Lakeland). The House budget provides about \$35 million towards construction of new USF System facilities including \$15 million for the USF Health Heart Institute and \$10 million for the USF St. Petersburg College of Business. The House budget also includes about \$15 million more for maintenance and repair of existing USF System facilities as well.

Over the next few weeks, the House and Senate will be working to craft a final state budget for next year by negotiating a compromise between the budgets proposed by each individual chamber. We will keep you posted on our progress and please remember to use the "[Alumni Advocacy](#)" link here or at the right to contact your elected officials in the House and Senate to ask them to support the USF System's legislative priorities during the "budget conference" negotiation process.

Go Bulls!

Mark Walsh
Executive Director of University Partnerships and
Assistant Vice President for Government Relations

THE USF SYSTEM'S LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

In each of the newsletters through the Legislative Session, we plan to highlight some of the USF System's top legislative priorities for 2014. In this issue we will detail our two top construction priorities for this session: the **USF St. Petersburg College of Business** and the **USF Health Heart Institute**.



Sky view of the USF St. Petersburg campus in Downtown St. Petersburg

USF St. Petersburg College of Business Facility

The USF St. Petersburg (USFSP) College of Business, USFSP's largest college, has a vision: a new College of Business building that would unify, under one roof, many award-winning programs currently taught at locations across campus and allow more students to enroll in these high-demand, high-job-placement fields. The USFSP College of Business is among only one percent of nearly 16,000 business schools worldwide accredited for both business and accounting by AACSB International. In the past five years, the college awarded over 1,800 degrees and the student body grew seven percent to more than 1,200.

The USFSP College of Business building is a top legislative priority for the City of St. Petersburg as well as for the St. Petersburg Chamber of Commerce. By investing in the USFSP College of Business, the funding will immediately allow for a collaborative environment in St. Petersburg to be created that will foster a culture of innovation and excellence in the area of business.

Last year, USFSP was allocated \$5 million to begin planning for construction of this high-priority facility. This legislative session, the USF System requested an additional investment in excess of \$10 million that will allow the project to begin construction this year and help realize this vision. The Senate and House budgets currently propose \$15 million and \$10 million, respectively, for construction on the USFSP College of Business facility. Approximately \$22 million in total funding is required to complete the construction and equip this critical facility. Stay up to date with all the exciting things happening at USFSP by clicking [here](#).



A rendering of the USF Health Heart Institute in the Health district of the USF Tampa campus

USF Health Heart Institute

The USF Health Heart Institute is an innovative vision for transforming heart health care in the Tampa Bay area and beyond. The goal of the USF Health Heart Institute is to make the Tampa Bay area the heart health destination of the world by personalizing medical care through looking at the genetic make-up of a patient in order to prescribe better treatment for those patients. For more information on the USF Health Heart Institute project, click [here](#).

In the past two years, USF has been allocated a total of \$19 million toward the construction of the Heart Institute. This legislative session, the USF System is seeking an additional investment of nearly \$15 million to help realize this vision. In order to complete construction of the Heart Institute, a total of \$30 million in additional funds is required and the USF Board of Trustees and the Board of Governors of the State University System have recommended splitting the remaining \$30 million requested over two years. This project is fully funded in the House Budget.

USF SYSTEM "FRIENDS IN THE LEGISLATURE" SPOTLIGHT: Senator Jeff Brandes



Florida State Senator Jeff Brandes represents Florida Senate District 22, which includes portions of Hillsborough and Pinellas Counties. Senator Brandes serves as the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Transportation. He also serves on a number of other committees including the Senate Committees on Agriculture, Education and Health Policy. We caught up with Senator Brandes to get his take on USF and

this year's Legislative Session. Here is what he had to say:

Q: What do you love most about the USF System?

A: The significant contribution of the USF St. Petersburg campus to the downtown culture of St. Petersburg. USF St. Petersburg is a staple of our community that binds the region together into a lively, enlightened family. Beyond St. Petersburg, the entire USF System commands respect throughout the state as a premier institution of higher learning. As a native of our community, I am incredibly proud of the successes of the entire USF System.

Q: What projects are you working on this session to assist the USF System?

A: I am focused on the future of the USF System. Specifically, I have been working on funding in the state's annual budget for the College of Business building at the St. Petersburg campus. Last year we were successful in securing \$5 million in funding for the project. This year, so far, we've included \$15 million in the Senate budget offer for the completion of this project. I'm excited about the great opportunity that this project presents to the USF community and I will continue to fight for this funding.

Q: What are some of your top priorities you hope to achieve this session?

A: My number one policy focus this session has been legislation to foster a robust, private flood insurance market in Florida as an alternative to federally mandated national flood insurance. My number one budget priority this session has been the funding for the USF St. Petersburg College of Business building. Aside from those two issues, I have worked hard this year to bring needed oversight in the non-profit sector to protect the many admirable charitable groups from abuse by unscrupulous bad actors.

Q: If you were a USF faculty member, what would be your field of study?

A: Over the past couple years during my tenure in the legislature, I have always sought out innovative ideas. If I had to choose a field of study as a faculty member, it would be innovation in government. As Chairman of the Senate Committee on Transportation, I have taken great pleasure in pursuing innovative solutions to transit problems and I think that we need more viewpoints that take a less traditional approach to problems in government.

For more information on Senator Brandes, visit his official Senate web site [here](#).

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2014 USF SYSTEM LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

- Florida Center for Cybersecurity at USF

- USF Health Heart Institute facility

- USF St. Petersburg College of Business facility

- USF Sarasota-Manatee's STEM Programs

- In-State tuition for U.S. military veterans

CONTACT YOUR SENATOR OR REPRESENTATIVE

[Click here to locate contact information for your local Florida State Senator and Representative, using your home address.](#)

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

To send us your feedback or ideas email govrelations@usf.edu.